THE CROSBY VOICE ISSUE No 34 NOVEMBER 1985
Newsletter of the Victorian Bing Crosby Society
Registered by Australia Post Publication No VBH 2120

Hello again,

I started off this issue feeling a little depressed that I didn't seem to have all that much material to put together a magazine. Some 72 pages, I realize that I was wrong! This is the thickest, most crammed issue ever of the Crosby Voice. I think that perhaps it could have used a few more pictures, but we used all that we had.

There are so many highlights in this issue, it's hard to know where to start. I guess that "HAIL KMH" would be as good a place as any. Vern Taylor has been making enormous strides in his research for this series. Considering that this issue of the Crosby Voice was supposed to contain the last episode, you may wonder why Vern is going to all that trouble! The simple reason is that in the New Year, HAIL KMH is going to appear in a book form. Not only will this book contain enlarged and revised chapters throughout, it will also contain an even more comprehensive version of the Kraft Music Hall listing which this Society published a year back. So many people have contributed extra information re programme details and guest stars that an additional printing is absolutely justified.

As a result of all this influx of information, Vern asked whether we could defer the final chapter of HAIL KMH "Decline and Fall" until our February issue. Of course we agreed. In the interim, Vern Taylor has supplied us with an original script of a 1942 Kraft broadcast. This runs to some 30 typed pages which we reproduce

---

THE VICTORIAN BING CROSBY SOCIETY, P.O. Box 422, South Melbourne, Victoria, Australia 3205.

Affiliated with the Queensland Bing Crosby Society, PO Box 92 Ferny Hills, Queensland, Australia 4055.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: President - Bob Machliss. Vice-President - Ken Orren. Treasurer - Keith Dorman. Secretary - Les Saynor.

GENERAL COMMITTEE: Bill Bennett, Josie Conway, Sylvia Harding, Jim McManus and George Styles.

USA REP: Richard Pearson, PO Box 1481, Arlington, Virginia 22210.

UK REP: Keith Parkinson, "Meadowcroft", Houghtons Lane, Eccleston, St Helens WA10 5LD.

from page 5 onwards. To conserve space, where these pages only contained a few lines, we overlaid them where possible. Another point to mention is that this script is over 40 years old and therefore , not as clear as we might have liked it. However, because of its unique historical value, we thought that it was absolutely worthy of inclusion. It's not that hard to read, after all.

HAIL KMH takes us through to page 34 of the magazine. On page 35 our Collectors' Corner features an interesting article on Bing's Australian Deccas.

Rosemary Clooney is on the comeback trail. Read a recent article about her on page 42.

Great news! Volume 4 in the Chronological Crosy is out now and this club has secured a limited number of copies for a special price. BUT BE WARNED. If you are thinking of getting these records 'eventually', you'll be sorry. Vols 1,2 and 3 are sell-outs around the world and there won't be any more! This club has one or two copies of 1 and 2 but none of 3. Don't wait.

Member Lyndon Ware is a collector of animated cartoons on video. Read about his collection on page 47.

Our Treasurer Keith Dorman is back from overseas and while he was away, paid a visit to the International Crosby Circle's meeting at Leeds in September. Read his and Keith Parkinson's reports of this event on pages 48 - 50.

A Video Exchange service is being established. This may be of value to you, but we offer a caution. See page 52 for all details.

Frank Sullivan from New York sent us a charming little booklet some time back on Christmas topics. One of these featured 1942's Holiday Inn and White Christmas. See pages 55 and 56.

Norman Wolfe supplied us with a good recent newspaper article on Bing. You can read it on page 59.

Richard Pearson visited the Bing Crosby Stadium in Virginia recently. You can see him and it on page 65!

And that's just a small sample of what you'll find inside this issue. By the way, do you like the cover? It's a blown up version of Frank Murphy's Christmas sticker which we showed last issue. Makes a nice cover, doesn't it. Well, on with the magazine!

FUTURE FUNCTIONS

At the time of writing (late November), we still do not have the final dates for our film screenings for 1986. However, the State Film Centre promises to have them through within a few days. The only problem is that we can't hold the presses any longer. Therefore, you should find a separate sheet enclosed which lists all the screening dates plus details of our first function for the new year. Should this not be present with your copy of this newsletter (Australian members only will receive it), please let us know immediately.

PAST FUNCTIONS

Only one Past Function to report on in this issue, our meeting of October 28th.

The films we screened were "MISSISSIPPI" and a late entry, "HIGH WIDE AND HANDSOME" which we decided to screen too late to include mention of in the last newsletter.

The meeting was well attended - over 80 were present. This was even more remarkable when you consider that we were up against "GONE WITH THE WIND" and "ANZACS" on television. Thank you loyal Crosby fans. (By the way, in case you are interested, "ANZACS" rated far better than the Gable epic. Perhaps too many people had seen GWTW via video to bother turning over to see it again.)

We also welcomed one of our Canberra members, Dr David Rentz, who made the journey to Melbourne specially to attend the screening. It was a great pleasure to meet David at long last. Interstate members are always good to meet, but be sure that you give us a little warning that you are coming so that we can arrange something special.

Our October 28th function was also our (yawn) A.G.M. and guess what - everyone was re-elected unopposed! You can find all the names on the inside of our cover.

Prizes in our door raffle were won by Jack Burns, Adrian Fowler, Bob McMenaman and Jim McManus. Jim just happened to be our ticket-seller on the night. Not that we're implying anything, mind you.

HAIL KMH!

BING CROSBY AND THE KRAFT MUSIC HALL

A Profile Of One Of The Great Radio Shows

Part Five: An Original Broadcast Script

c 1985 by Vernon Wesley Taylor

(Left to right: Norman Blackburn (former Head of West Coast Operations for the J.Walter Thompson Advertising Agency, Lina Romay, Carroll Carroll and Vern Taylor. Taken at Lakeside Golf Club, Los Angeles. September 27th, 1985.)

To The Reader Of The Crosby Voice:

It has been a deep and abiding pleasure for me to be able to bring you an account of Bing Crosby's best and most important broadcast series. Just as it was significant for Bing because it went furthest toward creating his public facade, it has enabled you and me to come to know one another a little better.

Your generous comments and constructive help have spurred me to far greater endeavour than I originally intended. The great good fortune I have enjoyed in meeting so many who worked with Bing on KMH during the past year, here in the Pacific Northwest and later in the middle-west, then in Los Angeles and New York - has made it possible to expand HAIL KMH! into a book. So many providing so much has made turning our little articles into a more important form. An Afterward to that book will list all who have helped in bringing it about so I will not explain that here, but many individuals, several already mentioned within the text, and public organizations, such as the Kraft Company, the Museum of Broadcasting and the Museum of American Broadcast Commercials are actually helping with the publication of the book.

The next entry, as Bob Machliss has told you, will speak of the closing of Bing's Kraft Music Hall, and it will being many new facts to light, from those within the show, a number of which will surprise you as they did me. This particular research has taken more time than anticipated so we have reversed the intended proceedure and will examine one of the show scripts in this issue.

This script was chosen from the several hundred available to the author,for several reasons. It was the very first thirty-minuter and the first show to use an expanded orchestra.

Bing mentions both these facts in the script, as you shall see. It is, also, one of the relative few among the shorter programmes that is not known to exist in recorded form.

Finally, it shows a number of cross-outs and changes, some in written form. Although this particular copy belongs to the series writer, Carroll Carroll, it can be assumed that some of the alterations were done by others, possibly even Bing, since the writing varies. We know that Bing very occasionally changed a word or a phrase (and sometimes changed them back again!)

It would seem likely that having to write a show but half as long, after so many years, problems of timing would occur. When you come to the section on the guest star spot (Charles Ruggles) notice that most of all of it had been revised. Pages fifteen to sixteen have been reduced to but five lines! Can you detect where Carroll did his chopping and refitting? Perhaps only another professional dialogue writer could find it.

Reading the script aloud, preferably with others taking parts, gives us a rare chance to 'get in the act' and also, quite incidentally, to discover the remarkably smooth continuity it was meant to be. Exactly what the millions of listeners heard that night more than forty years ago...

VERN TAYLOR November 1985

THE KRAFT MUSIC HALL
January 7, 1943

OPENING

1. THIS IS THE ARMY

OPENING SERVICE ROUTINE — CROSBY

2. BYE AND BYE WHEN THE MORNING COMES

C O M M E R C I A L — CHARIOTEERS

3. WHY DON'T YOU FALL IN LOVE WITH ME

CHARLIE RUGGLES SPOT — CROSBY

4. STREET OF DREAMS

MEMORY SPOT — BLAIR

5. FALLIN' THE JACK

C O M M E R C I A L — CROSBY

6. HABANERA

7. OVER THE RAINBOW — TROTTER

CROSBY CLOSING — CROSBY

NBC CLOSING, TAO COMMERCIAL & VALLEE PLUG

OPENING

CARPENTER:

The Fraft Music Hall with Bing Crosby, Janet Blair, John Scott Trotter and his orchestra, The Music Maids, The Charioteers and Bing's guests for this evening, Charlie Ruggles and Lieutenant Ralph W. Swearingen, U. S. N. And here's Bing Crosby!

THIS IS THE ARMY MR. JONES CROSBY

(Insert Lyric)

CROSBY:

THIS IS THE ARMY, MR. JONES
NO PRIVATE ROOMS OR TELEPHONES
YOU HAD YOUR BREAKFAST IN BED BEFORE
BUT YOU WON'T HAVE IT THERE ANY MORE
THIS IS THE ARMY, MR. GREEN
WE LIKE THE BARRACKS NICE AND CLEAN
YOU HAD A HOUSEMAID TO CLEAN YOUR FLOOR
BUT SHE WON'T HELP YOU OUT ANY MORE
DO WHAT THE BUGLERS COMMAND
THEY'RE IN THE ARMY AND NOT IN A BAND
THIS IS THE ARMY, MR. BROWN
YOU AND YOUR BABY WENT TO TOWN
SHE HAD YOU WORRIED BUT THIS IS WAR
AND SHE WON'T WORRY YOU ANY MORE
THIS IS THE ARMY, MR. JONES
NO PRIVATE ROOMS OR TELEPHONES
YOU HAD YOUR BREAKFAST IN BED BEFORE
BUT YOU WON'T HAVE IT THERE ANY MORE

(SHORT BAND INTERLUDE)

(Insert Lieutenant Ralph W. Swearinger Spot)

CROSBY:

This, friends, is the first of the war-time, digest editions of the old Kraft Music Hall . . . short-waving, as usual, to battle-stations everywhere. And from many a battle-station in the South Pacific area we're proud to number among us Lieutenant Ralph W. Swearingen of the United States Navy. Lieutenant Swearingen, as a communications officer on the staff of the commanding Admirals of three different task forces --- has [redacted] the enemy four times. Lieutenant Swearingen.

(ENTER - APPLAUSE)

SWEARINGEN:

Thank you, Bing.

CROSBY:

Don't thank me, Lieutenant. That's me and the folks thanking you.

CARPENTER:

Say, Lieutenant, Bing spoke of you as a communications officer. Just what is that?

SWEARINGEN:

Well . . . the Admiral has to be in constant and immediate touch with all ships of his command . . .

CARPENTER:

Yes . . .

SWEARINGEN:

And I handle the radio for the Admiral.

CARPENTER:

You must hear a lot of interesting things on the Admiral's radio.

SWEARINGEN:

I do.

CROSBY:

Have you heard what's doing with Red Ryder and Little Beaver?

SWEARINGEN:

The actual job, Bing . . . is taking orders from the Admiral and relaying them to the other vessels under his command . . . and taking messages from all the skippers and telling the Admiral everything I've heard.

BLAIR:

And they call you a Communications officer?

SWEARINGEN:

That's right, Janet. Why?

BLAIR:

They used to call my aunt an old gossip.

CROSBY:

In those ten contacts with the enemy, Lieutenant, did you get any on you?

SWEARINGEN:

Nothing but some blazing gasoline that got in my hair.

BLAIR:

Goodness! What happened?

SWEARINGEN:

No hair.

CROSBY:

Some singe. Looks like a very high G. I. hotfoot.

SWEARINGEN:

Funny it didn't burn me a bit. I was saved by my fire-brick scalp.

CARPENTER:

Say, Lieutenant, when you're talking to another ship by radio telephone, do you ever get the busy signal?

SWEARINGEN:

No. And nobody ever cuts in to tell me to drop another nickel.

CROSBY:

How about when you're talking and the Jap fleet heaves into sight. Then I imagine your time's up.

SWEARINGEN:

No, Bing . . . then their time is up. (APPLAUSE)

CROSBY:

Thank you, Lieutenant Swearingen. To help you enjoy the balance of your leave . . . here are the Charioteers . . . singing about how things are gonna be "Bye and Bye When the Morning Comes".

BYE AND BYE WHEN THE MORNING COMES CHARIOTEERS

CROSBY:

Fine, men. Here now is the man with the merchandising angle.

#8818
Kraft Cheese Company
Kraft Music Hall - Velveeta
January 7, 1943

FIRST COMMERCIAL
(TIMING: 1:00)

ANNOUNCER: All you homemakers know that this year the business of getting three well-balanced meals every day is going to take a lot of ingenuity.

One food that can be a real help to you is VELVEETA. For Kraft's nutritious cheese food toasts so perfectly ... melts so smoothly. These days when you get a loaf or package of Velveeta, remember the fine milk nutrients hidden in that rich yet mild cheddar cheese flavor. There's milk protein. Food energy. Milk minerals. Vitamin A. And Vitamin G, that's sometimes called riboflavin.

Plan to use this wonderful Velveeta nutrition wisely. Let smooth, golden Velveeta sauce turn left-overs into a nutritious and exciting main dish. Sometimes you might feature hot Velveeta sandwiches for luncheon. And use Velveeta to pack working power into the lunch box sandwiches.

Of course, I know you can't shut down altogether on the family's ice box raids. But suppose you just tell the folks that you need nutritious Velveeta to help out with regularly scheduled meals these days.

(UNANNOUNCED AFTER FIRST COMMERCIAL)

WHY DON'T YOU FALL IN LOVE WITH ME CROSBY

WHY DON'T YOU FALL IN LOVE WITH ME

CROSBY:

AS LONG AS YOU'RE NOT IN LOVE WITH ANYONE ELSE
WHY DON'T YOU FALL IN LOVE WITH ME
YOU'RE DRIVING ME CRAZY, BABY, TRYING TO GUESS
WILL YOU TELL ME NO, OR WILL YOU TELL ME YES
YOU GOTTA GO OVERBOARD FOR SOMEONE SOME DAY
BELIEVE IT OR NOT IT'S BOUND TO BE
AS LONG AS YOU'RE NOT IN LOVE WITH ANYONE ELSE
WHY DON'T YOU FALL IN LOVE WITH ME.

(ORCHESTRAL INTERLUDE)

CROSBY:

YOU'RE DRIVING ME CRAZY, BABY, TRYING TO GUESS
WILL YOU TELL ME NO, OR WILL YOU TELL ME YES
YOU GOTTA GO OVERBOARD FOR SOMEONE SOME DAY
BELIEVE IT OR NOT, IT'S BOUND TO BE
AS LONG AS YOU'RE NOT IN LOVE WITH ANYONE ELSE
WHY DON'T YOU FALL IN LOVE WITH ME
OH, BABY, WHY DON'T YOU FALL IN LOVE WITH ME.

CHARLIE RUGGLES SPOT

CROSBY:

Our good friend, Charlie Ruggles, one of the cinema's outstanding comedians is presently available in the 20th Century Fox Picture, "Dixie Dugan". Fresh from an Eastern bond selling tour we asked Charlie to the old Kraft Music Hall this evening to give us a report on the big town. What's doin', Charlie?

RUGGLES:

It's the same old town, Bing. Broadway's a little darker but the crowds are bigger and up at Columbus Circle the street hawkers and pitchmen are still selling their wares ..... I'd love to be one of those fellows, Bing ... they're so smooth ... they've got what it takes ... to take what you've got.

CROSBY:

Get this man a good busy corner, Carp, and let him make a pitch ... I'll catch.

CARPENTER:

Situated on one of the busiest corners in New York City, is the outside office of Charlie Buggles, street vendor, hawker, squaker, pitchman, faker and dispenser of oily chatter ... Helping Hawker Buggles with his struggles, is his faithful, but not too bright shill and stooge, Mokes Croveney. The suckers are gathering as Messrs. Buggles and Croveney sing their theme song:

RUGGLES AND CROSBY SING ... TUNE "TAH RAH RAH BOOM DE AYE"

CROSBY: Our place of business can't be beat
We open shop right on the street
RUGGLES: We peddle ties and shirts and sox
Watches, joo-la-rie and clocks.
BOTH: Tah rah rah boom de aye
We have no rent to pay
Our office is Broadway
Tah rah rah boom de aye
CROSBY: We've household gadgets new and old
Cut glass rings of phony gold
RUGGLES: Six months each year we're in the pink
BOTH: The other six we're in the clink .....

RUGGLES:

Now, Mokes, get out in the crowd and start the buying just as soon as I finish my spiel ... understand?

CROSBY:

(DOPEY) Oh sure, boss ... you know me.

RUGGLES:

Sure I know you. That's one of my problems. Now here we go. (PITCH) Here we are, ladies and gentlemen, this be-yutiful fountain pen ... the like of which you have never seen ... it is gen-yu-wine plastilactic ... will not rust ... will not tarnish ... will not leak, creak or squeak ... will not squint, squat or stoop, will not drip, drop or droop ... there's only one thing this pen won't do.

CROSBY:

(DOPEY) It won't write .....

RUGGLES:

(PLEADING) Ladies and gentlemen, do I have the face of a man who would misrepresent to you ... one who would rob you, cheat or swindle you? Do I look like a crook?

GANG:

And how, brother.

RUGGLES:

I must have worked this neighborhood before. Now, ladies and gentlemen, to introduce this wonderful pair of suspenders ... I won't charge a dollar ... I won't charge a half a dollar ... not a quarter of a dollar ... not a tenth of a dollar ...

TROTTER:

WHAT DO YOU ALL CHARGE?

RUGGLES:

Two dollars and 87 cents ..... and won't you come up here my obese friend with the five by five rotunda ... step right up ..... your name, please.

TROTTER:

JOHN SCOTT TROTTER.

RUGGLES:

Nice bunch of names ... and you've got room for every one of them ... now, try on these suspenders, Mister Trotter ... that's it ... I'll have this bright young man here help you.

CROSBY:

Who? Me?

RUGGLES:

Yes, you ... now, go around and hook these suspenders in the back.

CROSBY:

Better not.

RUGGLES:

Why?

CROSBY:

We ain't got a license to work the other side of the street.

RUGGLES:

Now, the next article I will place on sale is a genuine 52 piece dinner set...feel the weight of this plate. See how sturdy it is. That's absolutely unbreakable. (SOUND: CRASH) What about you lady ... how'd you like to own this beautiful 5/piece dinner set? This is a steal ... I stole it myself.

BLAIR:

What do the 5/ pieces include.

RUGGLES:

One plate and 50 toothpicks.

(SOUND: POLICE WHISTLE)

CARPENTER (IRISH)

Come on, you fakers, get off me corner or I'll run you in ... move along with ye, now ... git going ...

RUGGLES:

Why Officer O'Carpenter, we're not violating the law ... really we're not.

CARPENTER:

Well, I saw you trying to swindle this beautiful and attractive young lady and I decided to make a pinch.

BLAIR: (SCREAMS)

(SOUND: SMACK)

CARPENTER:

Guess I pinched the wrong party. Well so long.

UKIE:

Hey, you sold me that hair restorer yesterday ... you guaranteed it, didn't you?

RUGGLES:

Yes sir. I stand behind every hair.

CROSBY:

Brother, you're out in the open.

UKIE:

Well, I dropped it on the bathroom floor and spilled it.

RUGGLES:

Then what do you want of me?

UKIE:

A lawn mower?

RUGGLES:

Quiet, Pruneface ... you're interfering with the super sales event of the year .. for only two bucks Dr. Buggles Cure All ... it's good for tonsilitis, neuritis, rheumatism, hypnotism, stigmatism, laceration, stimulation, respiration (BREATHE) Good for hari-kari, beri beri, mumps, bumps, lumps and thumps, sprains, pains and insane brains ... and see the label ... it says "Untouched by Human Hands."

CROSBY:

Yeah ... we pack it with our feet.

UKIE:

I'll take a bottle ... I gave the boy the two dollars.

CROSBY:

Thanks, bub.

RUGGLES:

Here, Mokes, you're supposed to put that money in the register ... not in your pocket.

CROSBY:

Every year ... new rules with the money.

(SOUND: POLICE WHISTLE)

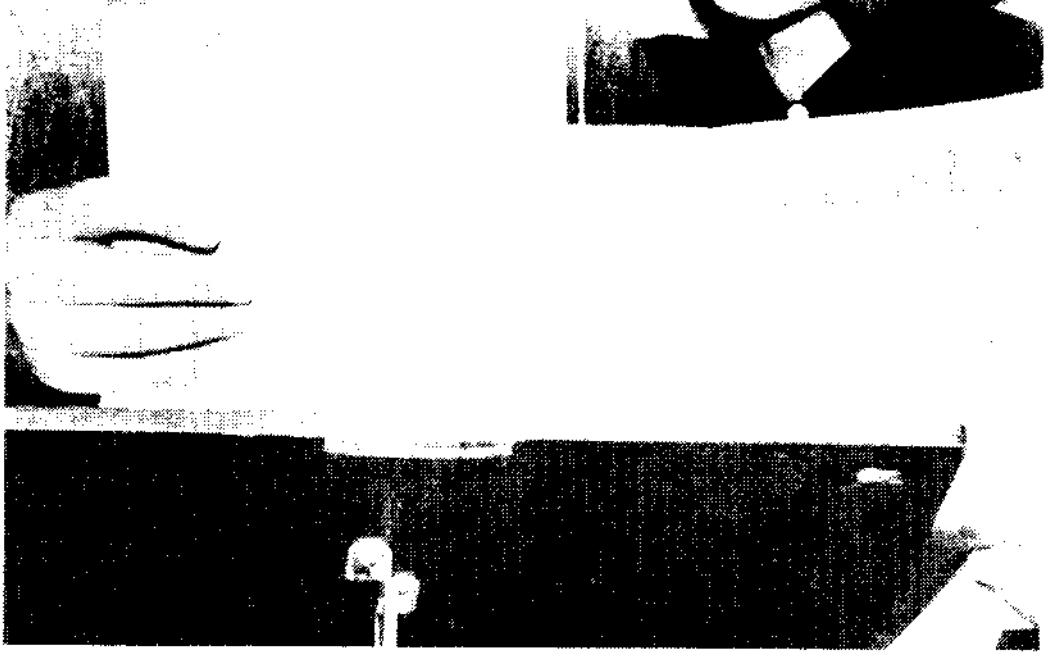
CARPENTER:

Beat it, you guys!

RUGGLES:

Listen, officer, let's settle this out of court. (MUMBLES)

NBC



CARPENTER:

(CUTS IN WITH) Sure? You mean it? Okay, shake. Well, that settles it .. on your way, you guys ... go on now ... git on with ye.

CROSBY:

Hey, boss didn't you talk him out of it?

RUGGLES:

No .. he talked ME out of it. I sold him the stand.

(PLAYOFF)

(REVISED) -17-

CROSBY:

Thus passeth a little commercial interlude with Ruggles and staff . . . what more logical than we turn to and Charming Janet Blair of ~~[illegible]~~ Columbia Pictures singing "Street of Dreams".

STREET OF DREAMS BLAIR

(INSERT MEMORY SPOT)

(MUSIC - FANFARE)

CARPENTER:

Time Marches Back . . . 1913 . . . Thomas Woodrow Wilson is President of these United States and the Panama Canal is opened to inter-ocean travel . . . 1913 . . . The Peace Palace is dedicated at The Hague, Holland and war breaks out anew in the Balkans . . . 1913 . . and in their homes, thinking men are saying:

CROSBY:

Say, Janet, get this Income Tax Law they just passed. All the exemption a single guy rates is three thousand bucks.

BLAIR:

You don't even make three thousand dollars.

CROSBY:

Then how can I pay my exemption?

BLAIR:

Harry. . . you're married.

CROSBY:

Oh yeah! Well . . . wait a minute . . . for married guys the exemption is four thousand dollars. Is that fair?

BLAIR:

Say, Harry, it says here in the papers that the new 1913 Loziers, Pope-Hartfords and Stevens-Duryeas are going to have a left-hand drive.

CROSBY:

About time they had a left-hand drive, too.

BLAIR:

Does that mean it's all right to drive on the left-hand side of the street?

CROSBY:

You must not do that! It frightens the horses. Another good gadget they got on the new Kissel Kars, Franklins, Inter-States, Chalmers and Thomas Flyers . . . is a gasoline gauge so you don't have to worry about running out of gas.

BLAIR: (REMINISCENTLY)

You know, Harry . . . you might never have proposed to me . . . if you hadn't run out of gas.

CROSBY:

Say, that's right! Maybe those gauges right up where everybody can see 'em ain't so not.

BLAIR:

They're all right. Now you won't be lighting a match to see if the gasoline tank is full.

CROSBY:

Ah . . . I never did that unless I was getting set to blow out of town.

BLAIR: (COAXING)

Harry, if you should get a raise and we could get a new Maxwell . . . would it have one of these new self starters?

CROSBY:

Who needs a self-starter? I don't have any trouble starting myself. It's the Maxwell I can't get started.

BLAIR:

I'm afraid those self-starters are going to hurt my uncle's business.

CROSBY:

What is he . . . a crank?

BLAIR:

No. He's a doctor. And he used to make a living setting broken arms.

CROSBY:

He'll have plenty of material to work on with these new cars makin' as high as thirty miles an hour.

BLAIR:

That's a terrible speed. Supposing some little nut shakes loose . . . you might get killed.

CROSBY:

The only nut you've got to worry about is the one Glint holds the wheel.

BLAIR:

I know . . . and that's you.

CROSBY: (SINGS)

"Marcheta . . . Marcheta . . . my poor heart is breaking."

BLAIR:

Oh, stop singing about your poor heart breaking . . . Which reminds me . . . mother and sis are both coming to visit us for a few weeks.

CROSBY: (SINGS)

"In my harem . . . my harem . . . there was Rosie, Posie, Josie. ... and the dance they'd do . . .

BLAIR:

Harry!!! Where do you hear those horrible songs!

CROSBY:

Horrible she says. Well . . . you like the way The Vernon Castles dance. Maybe you'll like this one. Get this.

BALLIN' THE JACK

VERSE

CROSBY:

FOLKS IN GEORGIA'S ABOUT TO GO INSANE
SINCE THAT NEW DANCE DOWN IN GEORGIA CAME
I'M THE ONLY PERSON WHO'S TO BLAME
I'M THE PARTY INTRODUCED IT THERE, SO!
GIVE ME CREDIT TO KNOW A THING OR TWO
GIVE ME CREDIT FOR SPRINGIN' SOMETHING NEW
I'LL SHOW THIS LITTLE DANCE TO YOU.
WHEN I DO YOU'LL SAY THAT IT'S A BEAR.

CHORUS

FIRST YOU PUT YOUR TWO KNEES CLOSE UP TIGHT
THEN YOU SWAY 'EM TO THE LEFT
THEN YOU SWAY 'EM TO THE RIGHT
STEP AROUND THE FLOOR KINDA NICE AND LIGHT
THEN YOU TWIS' AROUND AND TWIS' AROUND
WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT.
STRETCH YOUR LOVIN' ARMS STRAIGHT OUT IN SPACE
THEN YOU DO THE EAGLE ROCK WITH STYLE AND GRACE
SWING YOUR FOOT WAY 'ROUND
THEN BRING IT BACK
NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL
BALLIN' THE JACK.

CROSBY:

That was stuff right outa the "A" file back in 1913 . . . here's how things are today.

#6918
Kraft Cheese Company
Kraft Music Hall - Velveeta

SECOND COMMERCIAL
(TIMING: 1:10)

ANNOUNCER: In our audience I know there are thousands and thousands of homemakers who have ordered Velveeta regularly ... say, once a week ... for years. Your folks love Velveeta's rich yet mild Cheddar cheese flavor. You appreciate the nutrition of this cheese food. And you like the way it melts so smoothly for grand cheese sauce.

Well, THIS year ... when our allies and our fighting men need cheese products in such quantities ... you'll sometimes find that your food dealer is out of Velveeta. In that case, see if he has Kraft American, with the medium mellow flavor, or deliciously sharp Old English Brand. Both are nutritious, both toast and melt just right.

And whenever you buy a cheese product, remember you're getting some mighty important milk nutrients, richly concentrated. Use this important nutrition in cheese main dishes ... and in the lunch box.

For instance, Velveeta, (which is one of those good things a lot of us have rather taken for granted) is a vital dairy food. And, you know, dairy foods are mighty important in keeping us fit these days.

(UNANNOUNCED AFTER SECOND COMMERCIAL)

HABANERA TROTTER

CROSBY:

Thus John Scott Trotter and his newly augmented group of 24. Sounds great, John . . . those extra eight men really make the strings sound mellow. Could we now try them on something like "Over The Rainbow".

OVER THE RAINBOW CROSBY

(INSERT LYRIC)

OVER THE RAINBOW

CROSBY:

SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW WAY UP HIGH

THERE'S A LAND THAT I HEARD OF ONCE IN A LULLABY

SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW SKIES ARE BLUE

AND THE DREAMS THAT YOU DARE TO DREAM

REALLY DO COME TRUE

SOME DAY I'LL WISH UPON A STAR

AND WAKE UP WHERE THE CLOUDS ARE FAR BEHIND ME

WHERE TROUBLES MELT LIKE LEMONDROPS

AWAY ABOVE THE CHIMNEY TOPS

THAT'S WHERE YOU'LL FIND ME

SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW BLUEBIRDS FLY

BIRDS FLY OVER THE RAINBOW

WHY, THEN, OH WHY CAN'T I.

(ORCHESTRAL INTERLUDE)

IF HAPPY LITTLE BLUEBIRDS FLY

BEYOND THE RAINBOW

WHY, OH WHY CAN'T I

CROSBY CLOSING

CROSBY:

Those new strings sound fine and mellow, John Scott ... well that's got to get it for this evening in the old Kraft Music Hall, friends . . . but we'll all be back next Thursday ---- Janet Blair, John Scott Trotter and his titanic 26, Ken Carpenter, the Music Maids and Phil, the Charioteers and first person singular. You'll get us same time like tonight . . . at which time we're also expecting our friend, Gass Daley . . . That's next Thursday . . . till then, let's not let what few hard-earned success we've had in this war go to our heads . . . as the President let us see . . . we oughta be proud, but not cookey . . . the enemy hasn't even begun to give ground in any important area . . . he's still drawing lavishly on the raw material in the rich lands he's conquered . . . till we cut off these sources of supply, we're still, as Churchill said, only at the "end of the beginning" . . . . or as our Commander-in-Chief said earlier today, "Last year we stopped them; this year we intend to advance." Goodnight.

NBC CLOSING -20-

CARPENTER:

Tune in the Kraft Music Hall next Thursday at this same time to hear Bing Crosby, Janet Blair, John Scott Trotter and his orchestra, the Music Maids, the Charioteers, and Bing's special guests for the evening.....

The Kraft Music Hall comes to you from Hollywood's Radio City.

(INSERT TAG COMMERCIAL)

TAG END
(TIMING: 1:00)

CHIME SIX

WOMAN: Oh what can I serve for a main dish tonight?

GROCER: I've a last-minute idea ... righter than right!
Have macaroni-'n'-cheese ... made the KRAFT DINNER WAY
Cooks in seven minutes ...

WOMAN: WHAT DID YOU SAY?

GROCER: Just SEVEN MINUTES for a dish that's a winner!

WOMAN: Then give me a package of this Kraft Dinner!

ANNOUNCER:

Yes ... quickly Kraft Dinner gives you fluffy-tender macaroni drenched in cheese goodness. A swell main dish. A thrifty main dish. Try it very soon. Ask your food dealer for Kraft Dinner.

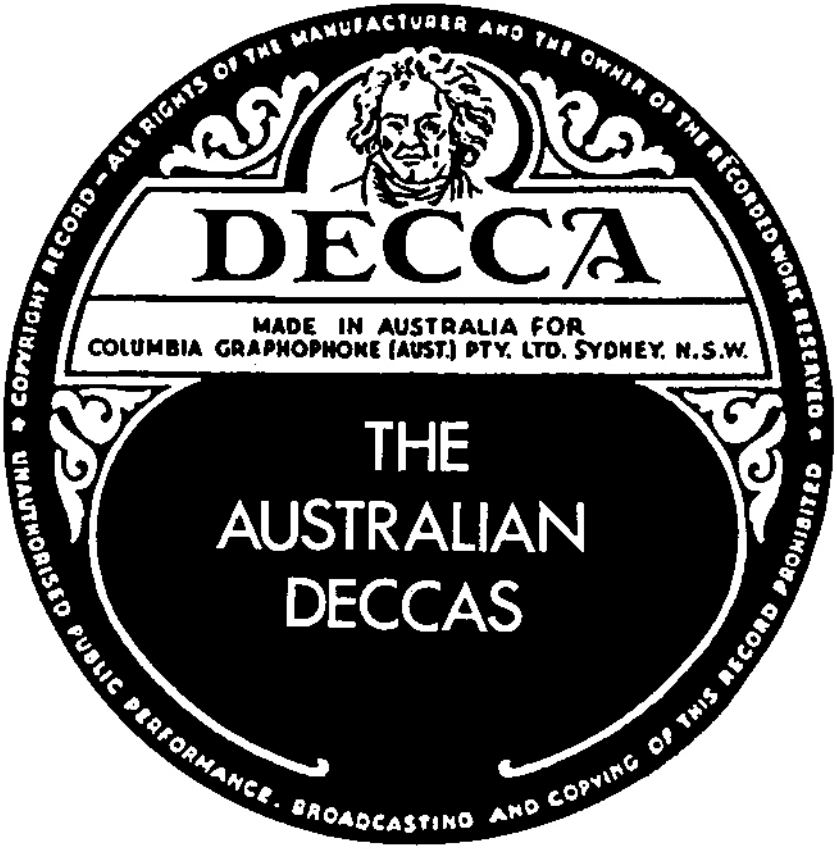
And since Kraft Dinner keeps so well, you can help your dealer lighten his problem of the week-end rush by ordering your Kraft Dinner the early part of the week.

-30-

FRAZER:

The Rudy Vallee Sealtest program will follow immediately over most of these same stations....from Hollywood.

THIS IS THE NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY.



COLLECTORS' CORNER

(Gordon Wall, opposite, provided the background information for this article on the Australian Decca releases of Bing's. Gordon also asked that credit be given to England's John Joyce (the printer) for reproducing the charactature of Gordon on the latter's envelopes and stationery. John and Gordon are two Crosby men to whom we all owe an enormous debt.)

The attractive, slightly ornate label depicted on these pages was, for almost 20 years, synonamous with Bing Crosby for Australian record buyers. And between 1934 and 1952, some 577 sides recorded by Bing for U.S. Decca found their way here in this fashion. The first - "I Love You Truly"; the last - "Watermelon Weather".

Not that this was the last Decca recording issued here. Later sides appeared on first Columbia and then Festival - all due to rearrangement of rights between EMI and the parent company over which label to use.

The design for the local Decca label was based on the U.K. Decca concept. It has been suggested that EMI chose the Beethoven image because of the quality connotations, and local EMI were determined to produce the highest quality records in the world! And certainly the Australian Deccas of the 1930's were of a very high standard - being produced on solid shellac. The price of each record reflected this. In the U.S.A. a Crosby Decca cost the equivalent of 2/6 while here the same disc went for 4/- ! But it sounded better. Still does.

During World War 2, when there was a severe shortage of shellac, local Decca records were made with cardboard centres coated with shellac, which if you managed to wear out, you would find coming through! War time issues also have a paler-looking label, reflecting the problems the company was having obtaining the same strong pigments as in prior years. When it came to photographing the labels used to illustrate this article, these paler labels proved very difficult to copy properly, as the type blended into the black background.

Although, as stated earlier, some 577 Crosby Deccas found their way here, there were an additional 171 sides that weren't issued here at the time of recording. Either these were not good sellers anywhere else and therefore considered not worthy of investment by EMI (remembering that there were often months between an overseas release and a local release), or the reigning theatrical 'firm' of J.C. Williamsons held the rights to the songs because they came from shows that J.C.W. were considering staging at some time. With the peculiar logic of the day, it was considered not a good idea at all to let the general public become familiar with show tunes before the show was actually staged. That Williamson's frequently didn't take up their options on the shows because of lukewarm response was of little consequence. By then it was too late anyway and the records never appeared. Two such examples were "Evelina" and "The Eagle and Me" - both from October 13th, 1944. Although issued on a Festival LP much later, they never made it back in 1944.

However, the tables were turned just three times. There were actually three Decca sides not issued in the USA and one of them only ever issued in Australia! This last track was of great value to Australian collectors as a trading item in the bad old days. The title was "Angels of Mercy" and the number was written by Irving Berlin as a tribute to the American Red Cross. The disc was issued here around the time that the U.S. Army arrived during World War II, which makes a lot of sense, but why it was only ever issued in Australia remains a mystery. The other two tracks,"Don't Break the Spell" and "Old Man River" are easier to explain. Basically, they are inferior records.

Bing is not at his best and the records generally lack enthusiasm. Presumably though, Decca thought that other countries might not be so fussy, and so the two tracks were slated for overseas release. "Don't Break the Spell" made it to England while "Old Man River" (this is the July 1941 version we're talking about) actually came out in England, Ireland, South Africa, Argentina, Belgium and Italy!

Occasionally, EMI had difficulty in getting a master record to make pressings from. So they simply took a mint 78, dubbed it across and made their own master! One of the Crosby tracks to suffer such a fate was "The Whistler's Mother-in-Law" which bears the additional lettering XYZ before the matrix number DLA2599 in the run-off grooves.

Certain Australian Deccas are very very difficult to obtain, it would seem, because, their release was limited to certain states. Gordon Wall says that "Beyond Compare" never enjoyed wide release and took him an age to find. Similarly, "The House Jack Built For Jill" was only issued in Sydney and is difficult to find outside that city. Yours truly had great trouble in finding "Life Is So Peculiar/ High on the List" because local release was apparently limited to Adelaide!

Did you know that one Crosby Decca 78 was backed with a Rudy Valle song. It seems that in 1941, there was a slight revival of interest in Vallee in the U.K. So EMI here backed Bing's recording of "You and I" with Vallee's recording of "It's Way Past My Dreaming Time" as an experiment. The experiment was not a success and was never repeated!

****
AGM - THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT
****

This is the eighth Annual General Meeting of the Victorian Bing Crosby Society. Eight years...I guess that that proves something about the ongoing appeal of Bing.

The most important occurence of 1985, in so far as this Club was concerned, was the change of venue from the Mobil Theatrette to the State Film Centre. This change was happily accomplished with a minimum of bother to members, although there were a few anxious moments for us on the Executive Committee. Possibly the only pmoblem that members have had was finding the theatrette once they arrived at the building. This small difficulty was, however, more than offset by the excellent facilities here - both from the comfort of members and the technicaly quality of the projection and sound systems.

The shrinking value of the Australian dollar had a major influence on the operation of this group in 1985. Firstly, it meant that our operating costs increased at a higher rate than anticipated which unfortunately had to be passed on to members in the form of increased membership fees yet again. Secondly, it torpedoed our efforts to maintain a record-buying service from other countries, for our members. In more than one instance, there was a $4 gap between the price we advertised in the magazine and the price that members actually had to pay! Obviously, there was no point in maintaining this service if the costs were so unreliable.

1985 wasn't all bad news. Thanks particularly to the efforts of member Vern Taylor in the USA, we were able to bring you on video a half hour of some of the rarest Crosby footage around. Tapes of this material were made available to members in Australia, The UK, Europe and the USA.

It should also be noted that Vern Taylor has been responsible for the excellent series on Bing's Kraft Music Hall broadcasts which appeared in the pages of the Crosby Voice. You may be interested to know that Vern is actually having an expanded and updated version of his work published in book form in the new year and that the book will also contain an even more comprehensive version of the Kraft Music Hall listing which this Society published.

Many people have contributed to this revised listing including our friend Peter Tatchell of the International Al Jolson Society. Peter was in New York a few months ago and was able to spend time researching the KMH broadcasts in the NBC files.

The club's audio and video library was well patronized again in 1985. Thanks to John Joyce (the other one) we were able to introduce the first of a series of new tapes featuring songs from Bing's broadcasts of the 1940's and 50's. We also added a series of 18 cassettes containing the first year of Bing's Philco Radio Time. These proved very popular and will be added to in the future. And also, as in past years, the Keith Hyde Bequest of KMH broadcasts continued to be very well received. We all remember Keith with great warmth.

Crosby records continued to be introduced in great numbers over the past year. The most important and exciting series was of course the Chronological Bing Crosby. Incidentally, we will be able to supply these records to members at a discount.

As usual, there are many people we must thank - our Vice President Ken Orren, Treasurer Keith Dorman, Secretary Les Saynor, and our Committee: Josie, Sylvia, Bill, George and Jim. Special thanks to Jim for his great help with our annual barbecues. And of course, mention of our barbecue means that we also have to thank Wally and Maureen Carson for the use of their home for the third year in a row.

Thanks also go to Neville Wragg and Clarke Sinclair of 3AW for letting yours truly go on the air every fortnight and pretend to be an announcer. That's great publicity for the club and worth a fortune.

On the other side of the world, two people we have to thank are our overseas reps - Richard Pearson in the USA and Keith Parkinson in the UK, a welcome newcomer to the ranks. Both Richard and Keith make our job a lot easier and help the club save a lot of money. And to end, as always, thank you - the members. Without you, there would be no Society.

NEW MEMBERS

Around 40 new members have joined in the last 12 months. Their names:

Gordon Kirby PO Box 1144K, GPO Melbourne 3001
Bill Osborn 219 Hardard Ave East, Apt 202, Seattle, Wash. 98102 USA
Wayne Elliott 1 Tara Court, Mornington 3931
Margaret Dunstan 5/389 Punt Rd, Richmond 3121
Ian Donald McRae 336 Napier St, Fitzroy 3065
Stan Leland 10 West 66th St, New York 10023 USA
Aldo Silengo PO Box 1, North Haven, Connecticut 06773, USA
Frank McManus "Shorelark" The Burrow, Portrane, Co Dublin Ireland
Ken Crossland 10 Brownes Rd, Bingham, Notts NG13 8EF England
Carroll Carroll USA
Jack Souther 2011-44th Ave, San Francisco, Cal 94116 USA
Cliff Fleming 54 Power Rd, Doveton 3177
Colin Pugh 29 Picton St, Montpellier, Bristol BS6 5PZ U.K.
Jim Houghton 58 Inglemere Road, Rock Ferry, Birkenhead, Merseyside
Charlie Tupper 64 Rhodrons Ave, Chessington, Surrey KT9 1AZ U.K.
Ian Ridout 18 Lorina Rd, Ramsgate, Kent CT12 6DD U.K.
Charles Carroll 15 Sahara Dr, Rochester, NY 14624 USA
Sydney Catford "Dalmore" Appila, South Australia 5480
Jock & Lois Meaden 108 Mountain View Pds, Rosanna 3084
Patricia Randall 79 Wilkinson St, Ocean Grove 3226
Gwen Harvey 38 Canterbury Rd, Farnborough Hants GU14 6QP U.K.
Larry Kiner PO Box 82, Redmond, Washington 98703-0082 USA
Betty Coates 101 Derby St, Kew 3101
Leonore Beecroft 2/15 Alfred St , Highett 3190
Mary Thompson 24 Shaftsbury St, Coburg 3058
Gery Lockyer 20 Dutton Rd, Para Hills S.A. 5096
Cyril Matthews 28 Collins St, West Heidelberg 3081
Alan & Irene Gittins 240 Douglas Pde, Newport 3015
Ray & Patricia Keane 57 Marlborough St, Fawkner 3060
Frank Walsh 1/1 Peacock Place, Burleigh Waters, Gold Coast 4220 Qld
William Brooks 31 Thorns Lane, Highland NY 12528 USA
David Hetherington 54 Staughton Rd, Glen Iris 3146
William Galetta 120 Webster St, Merrick N.Y. 11566 USA
Fred Dolby 69 Queensway, Melton, Mowbray, Leicestershire LE13 0DW
Larry Kieran 57 Park Terrace East, Apt B37, New York NY 10034 USA
Dr John Kohn 30 Harrington Ave, North Balwyn 3104
Dorothy Marston c/- 49 Floriston Grove, Eltham 3095

I WISH BING COULD HEAR ME NOW

SAYS ROSEMARY CLOONEY

ROSEMARY CLOONEY is trudging along the comeback trail again at 57 — wishing that her mentor, Bing Crosby, could hear her now.

Rosemary, who won a battle with drink and drugs years ago, declares "Hardly a day goes by when I'm not reminded of him.

"I could always rely on him when I was down. He always knew what to say and what to do."

Rosemary rocketed to international stardom in the 1940s and '50s with numbers like Come On-a My House, Hey There and This Old House. She sang with many of the big bands of the period and often was paired in recordings with Crosby.

Now she has a new record deal and a new album of Irving Berlin songs, and plans to go back on the road.

"I know it's tough out there, but it's the life I know best," she says. "After all, I've been singing since I was 17. There's still room for singers like me. People still like all the old standards and some good old jazz." Rosemary blames the pressures of show business for her alcohol and drug problems, and says that she recovered after treatment at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Beverly Hills. "At least I had the good sense to do something about it early," she says. "I went to therapy for a while, and I still go when I feel like it, but I think I have the problem beaten."

She and Jose Ferrer were married and divorced twice, the last time in 1967, and had four children. She says she doesn't expect to marry again — although she admits that she has had a steady guy named Dante DiPaolo since 1973.

"I don't see any point in getting married," she explains. "Only people who are going to have children get married, and I've done that."

But there's still one man she really misses. "I only wish Bing were here to hear me," Rosemary declares.

"He was a great man, a superb friend and teacher who never let me down. Without him, I don't think I would have made it."

NEW RELEASES

AT LAST! VOLUME 4 IN THE SERIES.

It's been a long time between Vol's 3 and 4 but worth the wait. As we understand it, John McNicholas, the producer, had monumental problems getting the record covers printed satisfactorily, but that is all behind him now. This disc covers Bing's records from March 1st 1928 to April 28th. Club members can buy it for the special price of $12.00. For mail orders, add $4.00, although for that price, you might as well try your local record shop.

BING 'N BASIE - ON COMPACT DISC!

Our request for information as to whether there were any Crosby LP's on compact disc yet, produced thewelcome response from several members that they had seen this re-issue in the shops. Sound quality is of course, excellent, although it's a shame that they had to pick on one of my least-favourite Crosby LP's. One suspects that this is a Count Basie reissue, rather than a Crosby one. Still, it's a welcome addition. For those who are interested, the disc is on the EMARCY label, made in West Germany by Polygram. Catalogue number is 824 702-2.

****

THINGS FOR SALE

****

ORDERS ARE NOW BEING TAKEN FOR THE REPRINT OF "THE ROAD TO HOLLYWOOD"

Australian members might very well ask "What's that?!" as very few copies of this splendid book found their way to this country back in 1973. "The Road To Hollywood" was the first (and still the most) comprehensive book on Bing's film career, listing plots, credits, casts, dates, TV showings, photographs, etc. The original book was over 300 pages long. The revised edition includes new chapters on TV, cartoons, awards and much more. The book should be out late this year or early next year, but will be limited to just 500 copies! To reserve one, you must send your deposit now of £7.50 to JOHN JOYCE, 21 BIRCHFIELD GARDENS, GATESHEAD, TYNE & WEAR NE9 7TJ. UK The final price is unknown at this time but should be between £10.00 and £15.00. Write now! Yours truly has a copy of the original publication and it is one of the most useful books in his collection!

BING DISCOGRAPHY

Even if your collection of Crosby records is small, you must have a copy of 'Bing - Just For the Record'. It lists every commercial issue made by Bing between 1926 and 1977, in both alphabetical and chronological order. It's invaluable for dating your records. Cost £4 including surface mail or £6 including air mail. Please make payment to John Joyce.

BING TAPES

Arnold Baker, 48 Groomsport Road, Bangor, Co Down, Northern Ireland BT20 5LR has well over a hundred different crosby cassettes for sale, covereing just about every type of Crosby music you can imagine. One Australian member was so delighted that he ordered everything in Arnold's catalogue.

LP'S AT A DISCOUNT

Two of Melbourne's record shops offer discounts to members. These are: The Bentelegh Sewing and Record Centre, 348 Centre Road, Bentleigh (ph 557 1050) and Cunninghams, 80 Church St, Brighton. (Ph 592 2066)

COLOUR PHOTOS OF BING

Frank Murphy operates the Bing Crosby Colour Photo Club.
Cost for Australian members is £8 p.a. and when you join you receive three photos plus two photo badges. Write to Frank at 32 Ferndale Ave, Tyne and Wear NE28 7NE, U.K.

****

OTHER CROSBY CLUBS

****

The world is full of Crosby Clubs for the collector and enthusiast. In these days of the unstable dollar , we felt it unwise to list the membership fees, so it may be best to write first and ask for details. Please include a couple of International Reply Coupons (available from any post office) to cover the cost of return postage.

INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE - Reg Bristo, Secretary/Editor. 7 Greenmeadow Close, Cwmbran, Gwent NP44 4 PJ U.K.

CLUB CROSBY - Al Sutton, Editor, P.O. Box 8283, Sacramento, California 95818, U.S.A.

SOUTHAMPTON BING CROSBY CLUB - Jim Newell, President. 17 Edwina Close, Bitterne, Southampton, Hampshire, England.

THE SOUTHERN BING CROSBY TRIBUTE CLUB - Phil Clarke, 21 Stockheath Lane, Havant. Hants. PO 9 3BU, U.K.

BING'S FRIENDS & COLLECTORS SOCIETY - Larry Gunn, President. 170 Terminal Ave, Menlo Park, California 94205, USA.

BINGVILLE NEWS, John Bassett, Editor. 15 Oast Way, Rochford, Essex SS4 5PZ, England.

KATHRYN CROSBY CLUB - Caroline Dawson, President. 1374 Broadway 7D, West Somerville, MA 02144 USA.

CROSBY CHRONICLES, John C Marshall, Editor. 39 Kings Road, Teddington Middlesex. TW11 OQD, U.K.

THE BING CROSBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, PO Box 216 (new address), Tacoma Washington 98401, U.S.A. We've left this society 'til last to speak of the excellent work of its Founder and President, Ken Twiss. The BCHS is without doubt the most important Crosby organization in the world today. As well as being involved in many community projects in Bing's home town of Tacoma, it is actively campaigning to get approval for a U.S. commemorative stamp for Bing and to raise the necessary funds to purchase Bing's first home as a centre for the Society's activities and a living museum of Crosbyana.

****
CARTOON COLLECTOR
****

Member Lyndon Ware has amassed a mammoth collection of animated cartoons on video - over a thousand in fact. Interesting, around 40 of these feature reference to Bing in some way, either inpassing or as the central character. The oldest of these dates back to 1932. Of course, Bing, or at least his voice, features in a cartoon made in 1930, as part of "KING OF JAZZ". Lyndon sent us the extract below which tells us more about this unique piece of animation. This comes from Leonard Maltin's book "Of Mice and Magic", New American Library, 1980.

OF MICE AND MAGIC

Lantz's next important encounter with sound came when Laemmle asked him to contribute an introductory sequence to the studio's all-talkie extravaganza THE KING OF JAZZ, starring Paul Whiteman. Universal spent (and subsequently lost) an enormous amount of money on this film, which was photographed entirely in the two-strip Technicolor process. Lantz's job was to create a sequence showing how Whiteman was crowned the King of Jazz. The bandleader was caricatured and portrayed as a big-game hunter stalking wild animals; his singing voice was provided by a member of the Whiteman Rhythm Boys trio named Bing Crosby. Even Oswald the Rabbit got into the act in this lively sequence full of rubbery characters and jaunty gags. For the finale, a lion conks Whiteman on the head, and his bump grows into a crown—officially designating him the King of Jazz.

Among its other distinctions, this was the first color sound cartoon, and it presented Lantz with a fair amount of challenges. First, there was the matter of dealing with Technicolor's limited color range within the red and green spectrum. Then the artists discovered that the paints they used did not adhere to cels—sometimes chipping off before the cameraman could commit a scene to film.

Finally, there was the music synchronization. Lantz rigged up a "visual metronome" system on film to give Paul Whiteman the proper beat to follow, but the bandleader balked at using this device. "Let me tell ya, sonny, I can keep a rhythm on anything," Lantz remembers him saying. "So you tell me how long the picture's going to be—three minutes, four minutes, whatever—and I'll give you the rhythm you want."

"I said we wanted four minutes," Lantz continues, "and I'll be darned if he didn't beat this thing out. It came to four minutes at 2/12 [two beats per second, or one beat every 12 frames]." The finished segment gets THE KING OF JAZZ off to a fine start and stands as one of Lantz's most engaging pieces of work.

35th ANNIVERSARY

INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

1950 — 1985

TWENTIETH
DINNER AND MEETING AT LEEDS

HOSTED BY

MICHAEL CRAMPTON

AND PRESENTED BY

MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

SUNDAY, 22nd SEPTEMBER, 1985

MANSION HOTEL

ROUNDHAY PARK LEEDS LS8 2HH

3.00 pm – 10.00 pm

(Please turn over)

****

KEITH DORMAN'S REPORT

****

During our recent overseas travels, my wife, daughter and self were privileged to attend the 20th annual meeting and dinner of the International Crosby Circle at Leeds. The occasion was also the 35th anniversary of the Circle. Venue for the event was the Mansion House Hotel, situated in the delightful Regency Park.

We travelled by express coach from Victoria Coach Station in London to Leeds in approximately 3 hours, where we were met by the Club's U.K. representative, Keith Parkinson. Keith proved to be an excelle host during the day.

On our arrival at the Mansion Park Hotel, we were warmly received and made welcome by Michael Crampton. Greetings were exchanged between both our clubs. An excellent programme had been printed for the day with photos of Bing on the front and back covers.

After the opening formalities, our hosts re-played a tape that Bing had recorded and sent to the ICC just prior to his death. I must say that the room was very quiet during these few minutes with many a misty eye in evidence.

The afternoon programme consisted of a Crosby quiz followed by an excellent video show compiled by Jim Reilly. A sumptuous four-course dinner was followed by more Crosby music and video. Of course, the bar was open and many half-pints were enjoyed by all!

The members were surprised when I mentioned that we have six meetings a year of which one was combined with the Al Jolson Society, plus a BBQ in Autumn. The ICC have only one meeting a year.

If there was one overriding impression of the Leeds get-together, it was that we were attending a meeting in Melbourne! Crosby fans are the same warm friendly bunch, regardless of on which side of the globe they are situated.

Several of the sixty people who attended the occasion sent greetings to Melbourne members: Larry Kiner, Michael Crampton, Reg Bristo, John & Mrs Joyce, Jim Reilly, Keith Parkinson and Renee Chester.

A few weeks later while touring around England, we were again the guests of Keith and Cathy Parkinson. Our thanks go out to them and their three lovely daughters for their warm hospitality.

****

KEITH PARKINSON'S REPORT

****

A report about the Leeds, England, International Crosby Circle meeting might seem out of place in the Crosby Voice, but the 20th Anniversary of this friendly event was special because of our guests. Keith Dorman with wife Ros and daughter Bronwyn met with their first taste of that well-known Yorkshire hospitality when I arrived at their coach station almost an hour late to take them to the meeting. There is not enough space to relate the story about motorway repairs, a case of mistaken identity and arriving at the wrong coach station, but all was soon forgiven.

The meeting was held at the Mansion House in the middle of Roundhay Park and the setting is a delight in early Autumn. But once 3.00 pm comes round and the meeting begins, there is little opportunity for strolling in the Parklands without missing part of a very full programme.

About sixty of us were seated when Michael Crampton, the organizer of these events, got the meeting off to a prompt start. A taped message from 1975 featured Bing talking about Yorkshire, set the scene for Reg Bristo, Editor of 'Bing' magazine and Secretary of the I.C.C. Reg reported on the way of the Bing world, the main news being the imminence of publication of the updated "Road to Hollywood" film book by Fred Reynolds.

Jim Reilly had edited a video of songs taken from Crosby films and the professionalism of this compilation was brought home to us all as the end result was shown on a large screen. Much of this material came from Renee Chester's own extensive collection of Bing's videos and one or two rare items were on show for the first time in many years. This three hour presentation was shown in segments until the meeting ended sometime after 10.00 pm.

During the late afternoon sunshine, everyone went outside the hotel to be photographed and John Joyce took video shots of the group. John was in evidence with his video camera until the meeting ended and we are looking forward to seeing ourselves as others see us at the next meeting.

The meal was roast beef accompanied by Yorkshire pudding and the sound of cutlery against crockery was overlaid with a cassette of

Bing songs which had been specially requested by members before the meeting. More songs followed with the quizzes which started the evening events and record albums were welcome prizes.

Discs and cassettes were also on sale and there was some brisk trading throughout the day. Almost all copies of the recently issued Spokane albums were sold, which must have gratified Producer Larry Kiner who was at the meeting with his son Michael. Michael is also part of the family record business. Larry has been active as producer of 27 Spokane albums to date, and has also been involved in other Crosby disc pressings over the years. Most of us will remember the break-through years of non-commercial Bing recordings, when material from radio shows began to appear on Larry's Totem label. Talking with Larry, I was surprised at just how few discs of each Spokane issue are pressed. Considereing the almbums are distributed on a world wide basis, 5000 discs may seem modest but this is in keeping with demand and Larry is catering to a specialized market. The only sell-out so far is Spokane 6 and Larry must regard his service to Crosby collectors almost as a labour of love.

The other record producers at the meeting were John Joyce and Bob Jones. John brought along a few rarities which were played without comment and which will eventually appear on John's club issues. John's policy seems to be that if it is rare it will be made available to everyone interested at a very fair price and of the highest available technical quality.

Bob Jones looks after a similiar group of collectors because his limited edition pressings also avoid the more obvious Bing material. Bob is prepared to seek out the obscure and transfer it to disc for all to sample.

My little corner shop at the meeting was a sell-out for the VBCS. I took along all my remaining KMH song-listing books and had more requests than I could fill. I understand that the book is no longer in print but at least it generated some publicity for our society. I also took along sample back issues of the Crosby Voice which contained membership forms with a view to swelling our UK ranks. Again, the two dozen copies quickly went, which you would expect with 'give aways', although I answered quite a few questions about the VBCS so I am expecting new members to join. Keith, your Treasurer, also said a few words on behalf of the Society and made the meeting truly international in flavour. All in all, a good day in good company, just like you'd expect any Bing Crosby gathering to be.

****
THE CROSBY VIDEO EXCHANGE BULLETIN
****

(Recently, Pat Sullivan, well-known U.S. Crosby buff, initiated the first Crosby Video Exchange Newsletter. To explain the concept, I can do no better than quote from Pat's letter:)

The goal of this bulletin is to

1) Provide a forum for those Crosby collectors who are interested in video,

2) Develop a directory of those interested in exchange on a ono-to-one basis,

3) Serve as a source of information on Crosby video available commercially and in individual collections,

4) Act as a pool of potential Crosby researchers and lobbyists to promote further release of Crosby material.

This first issue of the bulletin is devoted to a listing of commercially available videocassettes in the USA and scurces of supply. This list is not definitive and it is hoped that those of you who know of additional commercial material will write so that the information can be updated in the next issue."

If you would like further information on Pat's Video Exchange Bulletin, drop her a line: Ms Pat Sullivan
1301 Sheridan , Apt 96
Chico, Ca 95926 USA

WARNING WARNING WARNING WARNING WARNING WARNING WARNING WARNING

America and Australia (and the UK) have <u>different</u> television systems. The American system is called <u>NTSC</u> and the Australian/UK system <u>PAL</u>. These two systems are <u>incompatible</u>. In other words, videos from the USA cannot be played here and vice versa.

There are special video machines made that will play <u>both</u> systems but they are very expensive and you need a special TV set as well. These <u>are</u> available in Australia if you have a couple of thousand dollars to spare!

The reason I publicise Pat's project is that it will obviously go around the world and therefore tapes from those countries using the PAL system will be available to Australian members. Over the page follows Pat's initial list of videos available in her country.

NTSC TAPES AVAILABLE FROM:

Mike LeBell Video, 1101 Sth Crenshaw, Suite 104, Los Angeles Ca 90019.

Shokus Video, PO Box 8434, Van Nuys, Ca 91409

Movies Unlimited, 6736 Castor Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19149

Famous Films, Inc, Causeway Plaza Mall No 15, 12155 Biscayne Blvd, North Miami, FLA 33181

MOTION PICTURES: (Bing either stars or makes cameo appearances)
King of Jazz
Reaching for the moon
Sennett shorts: I surrender dear, Just one more chance, Dream House, Blue of the Night, Crooner's holiday, Sing Bing Sing.
Check and Double Check
Crosby, Columbo and Valley (cartoon)
Hollywood on Parade No 2 (short)
Hollywood, my home town (Ken Murray)
Hollywood without makeup (Ken Murray)
Holiday Inn
My Favourite Brunette
All star bond ralley (short)
Going my way
Bells of St Marys (ALSO AVAILABLE IN AUSTRALIA ON THE PAL SYSTEM)
Legend of Sleepy Hollow
Road to Bali
White Christmas
Country Girl
High Society (ALSO AVAILABLE IN AUSTRALIA ON THE PAL SYSTEM)
That's Entertainments, Parts 1 and 2.

TELEVISION:
Road to Lebanon (Danny Thomas Show) 20th June, 1966
Edsel Show - 13th Oct, 1957
Hollywood Palace - 7th February, 1970
Bing Crosby Special - 15th February, 1964
2 episodes - Bing Crosby Show (with Beverly Garland)
Jack Benny Show - 1950's
Ford Star Jubilee Salute to Cole Porter - 1950's cameo
Outtakes III - TV excerpt (from Shokus)
Outtales V - TV excerpt (from Shokus)

Anyone who can add to the above, please write direct to Pat.

(From a recent U.S. Video Guide)

BING CROSBY

Crosby's long and phenomenal popularity on radio, TV and in movies sometimes makes us forget that in the early '30s it was Bing's easygoing, low-key style of crooning that did more than anyone else to move movie musicals away from the influences of Broadway operetta to a more jazz-influenced, unpretententiously "natural" way of delivering both the melody and the lyrics. Some of that style-in-transition can be heard (and seen) in **King of Jazz** (*MCA cassette*), a 1930 revue-style extravaganza in early (2-strip) Technicolor (electronically enhanced for the recent video release). Crosby appears in several sequences as one of the Rhythm Boys trio with Paul Whiteman's Orchestra, singing "Happy Feet," "Mississippi Mud" and "The Bluebirds and the Blackbirds," as well as singing "Music Hath Charms" over the opening titles.

The next year Crosby, after leaving Whiteman's band, made a brief solo appearance in **Reaching for the Moon** (*Thunderbird cassette*), one of Douglas Fairbanks Sr.'s few talkies. In a shipboard café sequence, Crosby sings a chorus of Irving Berlin's "No Lowdown Lower Than That" before star Bebe Daniels takes over both the song and a subsequent dance routine.

Over the next two years, Crosby made seven movie shorts for Mack Sennett, six of which are available in various video collections, including **Young Bing Crosby** (*Video Images cassette*) and **Bing Crosby Festival** (*Budget cassette*). Each has a slight romantic-comedy plot built around Bing's songs, plus a typical Sennett chase. It's obvious that some of the dialogue in these shorts was improvised—training that paid off for Bing's later teaming with Bob Hope in the now-legendary *Road* series.

White Christmas
by
Irving Berlin

Ever since Bing Crosby sat down at the piano in the 1942 film "Holiday Inn," and introduced this immortal song, Americans have associated Christmas with snow, Crosby and Irving Berlin's "White Christmas."

"I'm dreaming of a White Christmas
Just like the ones I used to know
Where the treetops glisten
and children listen
To hear sleigh bells in the snow"

Bing Crosby and Majorie Reynolds in "Holiday Inn."

THE B.C.H.S. REPORT

FROM KEN TWISS

We now have the Palladium Plaque in our possession . This is the one that Bob Hope dedicated at the Palladium on January 18th, 1982. After we received it, I phoned Bob Hope's agent Ward Grant. He told me to write a letter, and so I did, asking Bob Hope to pose for a photo when he opened the Western Washington Fair, seven miles from Tacoma..

I got back a letter from Hope telling me to meet him at the rehersal for his show on September 6th. I was there with the plaque and was on stage for the entire one hour rehersal.

Then he took me and the fair photographer to his dressing room. No one else was present which rather surprised me. Bob posed with me - holding the plaque. (See page opposite)

I asked Bob whether he would co-chair the honorary stamp committee with former Governor John Spellman. He said yes. The committee now includes such names as Gord Atkinson, Pearl Bailey, Pat Boone, Perry Como, Bob Crosby, Dennis - Phillip and Lindsay Crosby, Robert Goulet, Phil Harris, Rich Little, Donald O'Connor, Sheldon O'Connell, Edward Kennedy, Frank Sinatra, amongst others.

The US Stamp committee meets on November 1st and the Bing stamp is on the agenda. I hope that it gets approval this time. It has been on the last four meeting agendas and turned down. This committee meets every three months.

.....

BCHS is getting much to big for me to handle and it concerns me that to date we can find no one to take my place. They do not need to be a staunch Bing fan - but it would be a permanent job for the right person - if they had the means to volunteer for a year or so until they could raise funds. I know that money is available - but it takes know-how to get it.

The most discouraging thing is the apathy in Tacoma. I have asked, pleaded and begged for a volunteer to help in the office. It is a job that is now much too big for one person. I'm sure that you are aware of the many things that have to be done to make an organization function. Newsletter, promotion, answering mail, packing and mailing records, and all the other tasks necessary. My personal friends answer the phone from 11.00 am to 3.00 pm daily which is a great help, but we do need something more.

.....

Regarding the poster you featured in the last edition of the Crosby Voice. We do have a few copies for sale. Cost is US$5.00 plus $2.50 for postage. Please address orders to:
The Bing Crosby Historical Society, PO Box 216, Tacoma, Washington 98401, U.S.A.

Despite Bad Habits, Bing Had The Swing

Knight News Service

The kid had a lot of talent. He didn't have a great voice, most of the critics agreed. He lacked the vocal strength that was considered de rigueur at the time, and he had a limited range, but still, he had something.

He was cool and jazzy and hip and just a bit cocky. And he had an instinctive feel for music that made him an innovator. But he just wouldn't work at it. He was, to put it bluntly, a little lazy and — well, unprofessional.

As one of his friends, Al Rinker, said later: "They put us on stage with 18 girls. (He'd) pick a girl and I'd pick a girl and we had a great time. Of course, like all kids in those Prohibition times, we developed a fondness for the booze.

"(His) casual nature extended into his professional behavior in that he would often turn up late for rehearsals — and even for performances — which caused trouble on more than one occasion."

Another pal, Matty Malneck, put it this way: "It is true that he was somewhat irresponsible when it came to attending rehearsals. He was always late. He liked to booze. I said, 'You're gonna wind up a bum. You're drinking too much and you don't pay enough attention to your work. All you want to do is chase the girls and get loaded. That's no way to behave.' But despite my predictions, he did become a star — the biggest star in the world."

The kid didn't start out like a star. He started out a bit like another pal of his, Bix Beiderbecke. He and Beiderbecke roomed together for a while

Bing Crosby.

when they were with the Paul Whiteman orchestra in the '20s. Both were brilliant innovators, musicians who would influence forever the music that came after them. But Bix was too self-destructive, and his cornet was stilled forever when he died at 28.

The kid, the unprofessional, boozing womanizer, lived a long time, and became known around the world as a consummate professional, a strongly religious man and a beloved family man.

He also was the biggest star in the world.

He made dozens of hit records. One of them sold more copies — millions more — than any record ever had.

He went into movies and became one of the biggest box-office attractions of them all. He won awards for dramatic acting, including an Oscar as best actor. He did comedy and became half of a classic movie team.

He had one of the most popular shows on radio and later had a hit television series and a string of classic specials.

Bing Crosby was the biggest star in the world. He died eight years ago, on Oct. 14, 1977.

His movie comedy partner, Bob Hope, was perhaps almost as beloved by the America of the 1940s, '50s and '60s. But Hope lacked the warmth of Crosby, and he was no dramatic actor.

It's hard now to imagine that there was a time when Crosby was thought of by an older generation as something of a threat to the nation's youth. But like most of the singing idols we have had, Crosby was something new and vaguely unsettling to the parents of his fans.

Critics characterized his style as "crooning," not necessarily a compliment in a day when singers like Al Jolson belted out "jazz" in the big-voiced music hall tradition and singers like John McCormack sang ballads in their classical operatic voices.

Crosby himself was disparaged as "the groaner," a nickname he later carried in a light and good-natured manner but one that was used with some disgust in the early days. But Crosby's style, whether "invented" by him or by Russ Columbo or others, as has been claimed over the years, was the way of the future. It was Crosby who popularized the highly personal kind of singing that has endured to today.

He was the right man in the right place at the right time. His voice was too small for the big music halls of the previous generation. His entire career was made possible by the latest technology of the day: the microphone and the radio.

With the microphone, he didn't have to strain to sing loud. He could concentrate on *saying* the words musically, conveying the meaning of the lyrics as no music hall showman or opera singer ever had.

If you doubt Crosby's gift for seeing and conveying the true meaning of lyrics, you need only see how effortlessly he became an outstanding dramatic actor, as did Frank Sinatra after him. And why not? They were excellent dramatic actors in their music.

Crosby also was a fine jazz musician, a great scat singer and a friend and fan of Louis Armstrong, another seminal musical figure. But most of all, he was popular. As of 1975, his recording of "White Christmas" had sold more than 30 million copies, making it — at the time, at least — far and away the best-selling single of all time.

TRADING POST

FRANK WALSH
1/1 Peacock Place, Burleigh Waters, Qld 4220 (phone 35 8026)
has the following movies videotaped from TV (commercials included) which he is prepared to make copies of: Here Comes the Groom, Going My Way, Road to Hong Kong, That's Entertainment (Pt1), High Time, Just For You, Bells of St Marys, Mr Music, Dr Cook's Garden, Riding High, Stagecoach, Country Girl and Let's Make Love.

Frank doesn't say what he wants in return (if anything) or whether he can supply both VHS and Beta. BUT REMEMBER, these tapes are on the PAL system which cannot be played in the USA! I remind you of this again because Frank also writes: "I purchased a tape of MyFavourite Brunette" whilst in the USA recently, but found on arrival home that America has a different system that doesn't work in Australia. Would anyone be interested in this tape?"

If you have a machine that can play NTSC (the American system), would you be interested in Frank's tape? Perhaps you have a PAL version you could exchange for it.

STEPHEN LAMBRIDES
58 Guthrie St, Paddington, Qld 4000 (phone (07) 369 9852)
wants to BUY or TRADE for the follwing 78's he requires:

DECCA Y5006 Love is just around the corner/Maybe I'm wrong again
Y5013 Takes 2 to make a bargain/I wished on the moon
Y5028 From the Top of your head/I wish I were Aladdin
Y5029 Two for tonight/Without a word of warning
Y5098 I've got plenty of nothin/It ain't necessarily so
Y5124 Shoeshine boy/Me and the moon
Y5156 For love alone/I never realized
Y5162 My Little buckeroo/What is love?
Y5275 Old Folks/You must have been a beautiful baby
Y5589 You're dangerous/You lucky people you
Y5654 It makes no difference now
Y6023 These foolish things/Pretending
Y6128 The rose of Tralee/Silver threads among the gold
Y5681 Did your mother come from Ireland/Where the river Shannon flows

Stephen also requires the following LP's:

How the west was won, Wilfred Thomas Show, Christmas Star, Jack B. Nimble - a mother goose fantasy, Say one for me, Ali Baba and the 40 thieves, The Emperor's new clothes, Paris Holiday, Goldilocks, Les Poupees de Paris, Tom Sawyer, Three billion millionsiares, Hey Jude Hey Bing (UK issue), The Bible story of Christmas, Bing on the Happy Side, America I hear you singing, 12 songs of Christmas, Tribute to Michael Holiday.

And finally, any Crosby on Australian Brunswick 78's. (Lots of luck, Stephen!)

BOB MACHLISS
P.O. Box 422, South Melbourne, Vic 3205

Wants just one 78, but is prepared to pay an excellent price for it!

Australian Decca Y5509 - THINE ALONE.

Yes, old disc, thine alone is the only one for me.

FRANK WALSH (see previous page), also wants:

Three LPS - Blue Skies COPS 5115
Going Hollywood (Australian Club Issue)
Both Sides of Bing - Curtain Calls 100/2

STAN LELAND
10 West 66th St, New York New York 10023, USA

seeks a very very rare Crosby 78. It's the special 1934 white label Decca recording of Silent Night/Adeste Fidelis/Lift Up Your Heart/Stabat Mater. This disc was pressed to raise funds for the Columbian Missionary in China and is as scarce as the proverbial hen's teeth! Still, copies do turn up and if you know of anyone with one to spare, why not drop a line to Stan.

PETER TATCHELL
40 Bamba Road, Caulfield, Victoria 3161
has literally hundreds of hours of broadcasts by Bing, Burns and Allen, Fanny Brice, Jimmy Durante, Groucho Marx and Al Jolson. Peter is prepared to tape the shows of your choice on cassette for just $5 an hour (tape included). Peter is also interested in trading his shows for old BBC shows such as (Hancock's Half Hour' and 'Take it From Here'. If you'd like to ring, Peter's number is (03) 211 3577.

THE Q.B.C.S. REPORT

From Les O'Donnell

This is a report of our last meeting which was held on October 12th. The October meeting is always held on the Saturday closest to the anniversary of Bing's death.

This year we decided to have a combined meeting with the Queensland AL Jolson Society as this years marks the 100th year since Jolson's birth. In memory of the two superstars, we thought that we would show a film by each of them.

We prepared signs and posters for the programme but due to unforseen circumstances, we ended up with an entirely different programme to the one we had planned. Never mind, it all worked out in the end. The films we eventually showed were "Rose of Washington Square" starring Tyrone Power, Alice Faye and Jolson. This was followed by "Rhythm on the Range" starring you-know-who and co-starring Bob Burns, Frances Farmer - a lady who received considerable publicity in recent years after a film was made of her life story.

All present enjoyed the programme and it was very good to hear people laughing again, especially after all the dramatic movies we see at the cinema these days.

We had a fairsized audience which made the evening well worthwhile.

Our next function is our main one for the year - our Christmas Party. It will be held at our President Vic Bridger's residence in Samford on December 7th. Starting time is 5.00 pm. We lead off with a buffet followed by quizes and games, Christmas tree, Christmas video and films, and of course, Christmas music by Bing.

I wish you and all the members a very Happy Christmas and the very best for the New Year.

****

CORRECTION

In our February 1985 issue, we printed an article from member Mark Tocher on "That Crosby Whistle". Mark recently supplied two more titles to his list of Crosby discs which contained examples of the beautiful Crosby whistling style.

1947 - Memories 1975 - La Borrachita

LETTER BOX

From John McNicholas, Harrow, Middlesex

I've been running here, there and everywhere in pursuit of decent quality 78's for John Davis to work from for the Chronological Bing Crosby LP's. Also, I have had a five month running battle with the printers of Vol 3 sleeves. In the end, I reluctantly accepted them after they were printed four times, although I still wasn't happy. The new Volume 4 sleeve has been printed by new people who were more expensive - but there was no hassle. Volume 5 will be ready by mid-December.

From Vern Taylor, Portland, Oregon.

I was a guest recently at one of the nights organized by the Pacific Pioneer Broadcasters in LA, a group of retired and still-active broadcast-performers and technicians. Some of the oldtimers who worked on KMH brought mementos of their days then, for me to see and copy. Much of it is most illuminating and does wonders to explain precisely how and why KMH bit the dust.

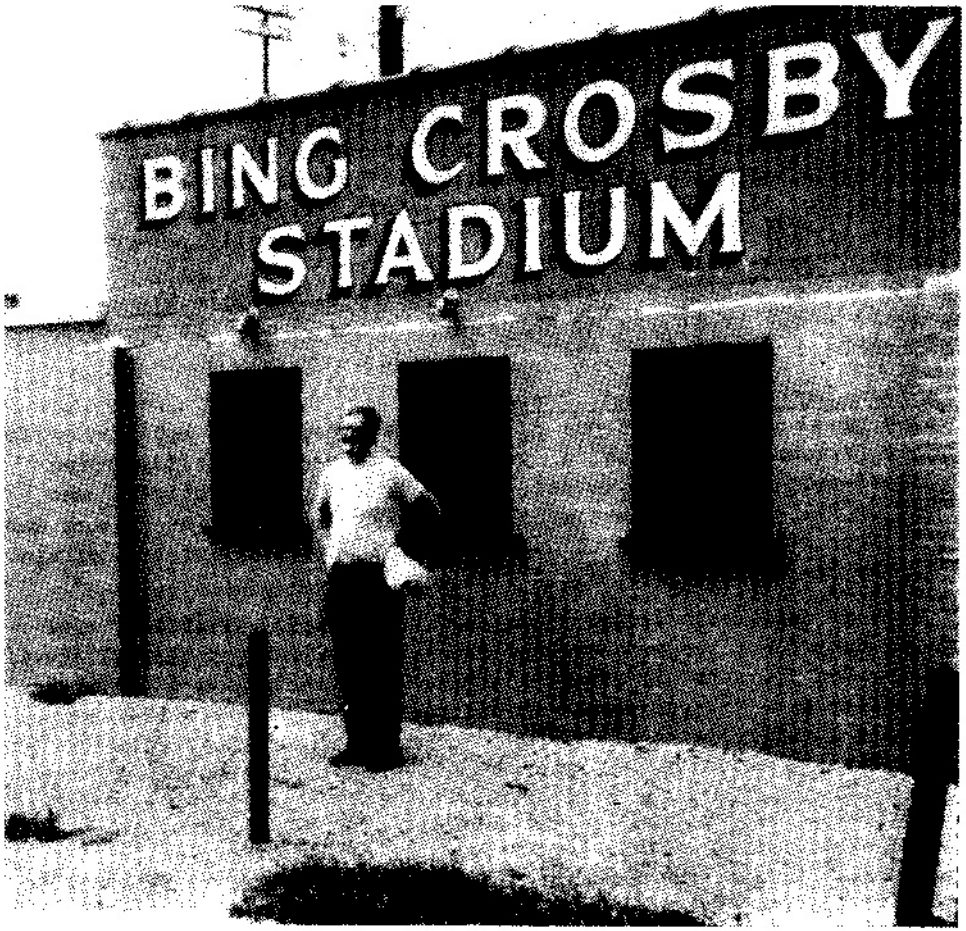
You will be amused to learn (from Carroll Carroll) that your new logo of Bing in a top hat was the image that KMH rejected for Bing. They decided to make him more 'downhome' and 'homespun'. Paramount, which watched the Kraft show's handling of the Crosby public personna, very soon got the message. No more heavy costume stuff like "Mississippi", nor top-hat appearances, such as in "Two For Tonight". They immediately put him in a cowboy-in-overalls epic, "Rhythm on the Range" and in "Pennies From Heaven" as an ex-prisoner!

From Col. Robert Stratiff, Colonial Heights, Virginia

I can't tell you how much I look forward to 'The Crosby Voice'. I must admit, however, that I am quite envious of the social calendar of our fellow members 'down under'. How great it would be to enjoy the good fellowship of Bing's friends and admirers while taking in one of his early films. To reprise a line from a Crosby-Astaire tune, "Wow! How lucky can you get?".

From Charles Carroll, 15 Sahara Drive, Rochester, NY 14624 USA

Recently, a friend gave me an old album he found in an attic. The disc is entitled 'Sunday in Hollywood' and features Bing and Fr. Francis Caffrey discussing religion. It is not dated. Can anyone tell me anything about this album. Your assistance would be greatly appreciated.



From Richard Pearson

Here I am in front of the Bing Crosby Stadium in Front Royal, Virginia. The stadium has been there many years although it had a fresh paint job recently. Bing visited Front Royal many years ago for a parade or a golf tournament (or perhaps both). During this time, he called in to the Skyline Caverns (one of many caverns in Virginia). There is a photo of Bing in the Caverns hanging on a wall in the gift shop. To the best of my knowledge, this photo is not for sale, nor have I seen it elsewhere.

FROM OUT OF THE PAST

Our 'From Out Of the Past' pages feature two articles which we hope will be of interest.

The first concerns the passing of Rhythm Boy Harry Barris in 1962.
I must confess that I was ignorant of the date of Barris's passing and also, the cause.

Following this article is a 1939 feature from the American magazine "Photoplay" which shows how well established Bing's easy-going image was by that time.)

Composer Harry Barris Dies of Cancer at 56

One of Original 'Rhythm Boys' With Bing Crosby; Underwent Operations After Fall

Harry Barris, 56, composer and one of the original "Rhythm Boys" with Bing Crosby and Al Rinker, died of cancer Thursday at St. Joseph Hospital, Burbank.

Mr. Barris had been ill since May 11, 1961, when he broke a hip in a fall, necessitating a series of operations. Malignancy developed, and he had been in St. Joseph's since last Sept. 24.

He launched his musical career at 17 as pianist with a band that toured China and the Far East.

Mr. Barris wrote a number of hit tunes, including "Mississippi Mud," "Lies," "I Surrender, Dear," "Little Dutch Mill," "It Was So Beautiful," "Beyond Compare" and "It Must Be True."

His last song, "Never Been So Lost," recently was published in a record album entitled "Half-Past Lonely."

COMPOSER DIES—Harry Barris, a former Bing Crosby colleague, died Thursday of cancer.
Times photo

Organized in 1929

The Rhythm Boys were founded in 1929 after bandleader Paul Whiteman saw Mr. Barris perform in a "single act" at the Olson Club in New York City, friends recalled.

Whiteman introduced him to Crosby and Rinker, already with the Whiteman band, and the trio was an immediate success, remaining together until motion picture careers separated them in 1931.

Mr. Barris leaves his widow, Mrs. Esther Margie Barris; two daughters, Mrs. Zelle Lippincott of Los Angeles and Miss Marti Barris, and his mother.

Funeral services will be held Monday at 2 p.m. in Church of the Hills, followed by interment in Forest Lawn Memorial-Park Hollywood Hills.

CLOSE UP OF THE GROANER

Painted by a master—a picture of that small-town boy, Boo-boo Bing, who steps out of these hilarious pages in startling reality

BY CLAUDE BINYON

The author of this story, one of Hollywood's most famous dialogue writers, has turned out such hits as "I Met Him in Paris," "Sing, You Sinners" and, now the sequel, "Sing Some More."

YOU can be a writer and like an actor without wanting to write his next picture, and that's the way I was with Bing. A Crosby picture was a thing with singing in it; nobody seemed to care who did what to anybody in the story so long as The Groaner was giving with his throat. That hurt the pride of a lot of writers.

But here Bing was at his Del Mar Race track, ambling about with a bad small-town haircut, wearing those short, flaring sweaters that his wife keeps throwing away, flashing a large button on his chest reading: "Cool Head Main Thing." And there were the solid, human people of the California coast, his friends, talking to him and listening, and none of it about pictures.

The haircut was a thing to see. Bing didn't have enough hair left to lure a flea off a Mexican hairless.

"How did you get it?" I asked him, awed.

The Groaner shrugged. "The barber and I got to talking . . ." he said.

There was another insight when Bing and the postmaster talked it over.

"Things ain't good yet," said the postmaster, concerned. "Second-class mail's fallen way off lately."

"Maybe it's just laziness," said Bing. "I'm getting so I hate to mail a letter myself."

What I'm getting at is that this Bing Crosby wasn't the guy in the pictures. He had character and he looked like a patch quilt—if he got out of the house without his wife seeing him.

He was the fellow in every small town who loved life and hated work and would never amount to a darn.

That was more like it. Wesley Ruggles and I talked to Bing about playing that small-town character, bad clothes and all, and Bing was more than ready. Thinking of the character he had inspired, I started writing and forgot Bing. When people asked me what I was writing I told them it was about a smalltown bum. People, meanwhile, were asking Bing. He said I was writing the story of his life.

Once, when we were together, we were confronted by our statements. Bing shrugged. "We're both right," he said. . . .

THAT was the start of the film "Sing, You Sinners," and, when it was previewed, critics said Bing was an actor. He refused to believe it.

Early in the picture he was studying a scene, dubiously. "Look," he said finally, "don't put too much stuff for me in these scenes. I do two kinds of acting—loud and soft."

When Bing learned that Fred MacMurray was to share starring honors with him in the picture, he grinned. "Write plenty of scenes for him," he suggested. "Remember—I live near a golf course."

The Groaner loves big words and has a knack with them. There was the spot in the picture where he was supposed to say simply: "I'm going to Los Angeles."

In rehearsal he flourished and let loose: "Let no foul hurdles besmirch my path, Mother. I'm furbishing my little kit for that excruciating trek to the provocative hamlet of the angels."

His screen mother stared. "Is that in?" she asked.

"I'm sorry," said Bing. "I'm still going to Los Angeles."

Another of his rehearsal pastimes is to sail off on a tangent, playing a scene quite unlike the one in the script. He may start a harmless love scene and wind up as a one-eyed panhandler, begging for five-dollar bills on the streets of Minneapolis.

Actors love to get that heady feeling, and in short order the entire cast may be playing a scene entirely foreign to the one in the picture. Then the director calls for work—and Bing is the only one who knows the lines in the actual scene. Whereupon he stands beside the director and chides the actors for lack of diligence.

By automobile The Groaner goes from point to point in amazingly short time. When questioned, he expounds a method of judging traffic signal changes so accurately that he need never stop. I've ridden with him and he's a liar on all counts.

Those who have seen his broadcasts are first shocked by his weirdly careless style of dress; then charmed by his complete ease of manner. He often has sung of love with gum on his tongue and a pipe clamped between his teeth.

This should put guest stars at ease on his programs, but a few of them have blown higher than a kite just thinking of the contrast between Crosby and themselves.

There is a belief that the day Crosby learns he is washed up in radio and pictures he will say, "Oh," and go home and eat.

HIS home life is a pleasant turmoil of domesticity. Fresh from his crooning, he will be confronted at the door with a report of his four sons' wrongdoings. He may spank one, put two to bed and forbid the fourth to play "Snow White" records on the phonograph. Sometimes, at the height of a feud, the boys must be fed in separate rooms. There is always noise and a visitor finds himself involuntarily ducking.

Gary, the eldest son, is almost as deep-voiced as his father and considers himself a man. If permitted, he would rule the brood with an iron hand—the same iron hand that has left its mark on furniture and walls alike without partiality. Gary has a girl but remains discreetly silent about her unless giddy with coca-cola.

During the filming of "Sing, You Sinners" the boys were brought to visit their father on location. They sat in a row, respectful and quiet, watching preparations for a scene. Then Bing started acting. Gary jumped to his feet and poked the twins. "Hey," he said derisively, "look at the old man!"

The shocked nurse elbowed Gary into a sitting position. "Don't talk like that," she admonished sharply.

"Aw," said Gary, "he knows he's no good."

CONSIDERATE to a fault sometimes, The Groaner has drastic reversals. He has let a production unit twiddle its thumbs while he watched a horse race. He has refused to work unless an unemployed property boy is hired. He would not start a picture unless a certain cameraman was used. The result was that the gratified individual lighted Bing so brilliantly in scenes that he stood out like a well-polished loving cup.

I have seen his patience tried. He is proud of his ranch home near Del Mar and the interior is spotless. There were several of us warming ourselves over a bottle after a pack trip into the mountains and finally one of the men aimed a hunting knife at the living room door. The knife glanced and knocked a large chip from the painted surface. Then somebody else picked up the knife and threw it at the door. That was the start of a contest. Bing sat watching, quietly. After a while he went outside and I followed.

"That's a lousy trick in there," I said.

"They're just having fun," said Bing.

"It's nice of you to take it this way," I said. "If it were my house, I'd be sore."

"I am sore," said Bing.

"Then why don't you do something?"

"They're just having fun."

We went inside. The door was a mess and they were still throwing. Bing picked up the knife and held it a moment, and I was waiting. Then he threw the knife and it lodged in the door.

"That's the way to do it," he said.

Bing's Toluca Lake house is a spacious colonial affair, the second he has built in the district. Before the first house was built, he bought the available land surrounding it. Soon he sold both the land and the house and bought more property near by. If the profit from the land didn't pay for both houses, I'll eat one of his Hawaiian shirts.

He is incorporated for radio, pictures, phonograph records, race track activities and several lesser ventures. He is on the board of directors of many strange things, including an eating club. The incorporation employs two of his brothers and his father. I once worked for the outfit as a radio writer, receiving my contract from one brother, my checks from the other and an autographed picture of Bing from his pa.

"Did you ever think Bing would amount to anything?" I asked the father.

"Well," he said, "he was all right."

Bing's mother is solid American. She doesn't like to see Bing drink in a picture but she lives in her own house with the father where she won't interfere with anything. She goes to Bing's race track with her husband, and they sit in Bing's box, studying their form sheets. They look at the tips from Bing's stable and usually discard them. Then they discuss the merits of all horses. Finally the mother says she will split a two-dollar bet with the father. He talks about horses some more and goes to make the bet. It is too late.

Bing's wife, Dixie, picks her friends and sticks with them. Most of them are holdovers from the early days and Hollywood doesn't know them. That's all right with her, and it's all right with the friends.

But what I started to say is that Bing as an actor didn't interest me until I realized that off the screen, basically, he is the small-town boy who loves the full life and hates work and all its routine and will never—let him live three hundred years—amount to a row of bad peas.

It is not my fault that even God sometimes is guilty of miscasting.

And that's it for this magazine. If you've reached this page after half-an-hour's reading, then you haven't read the magazine properly! Go back to the start and begin again. Do not pass go. Do not collect $200! Phew...what a marathon. I do apologise for any typographical errors. I'm sure that there are a lot that I have missed. Well that's all for 1985. My very best wishes to you and yours for the festive season.

Bob Madle

BACK PAGE SPECIAL